7/5/72

Dear Howard,

Because of the kind of day this has been, I've been catching up on odds and ends. This includes listening to the tapes on VN I referred to in a shorter note. Although I was interrupted and my mind sometimes tended to wander onto thoughts today closer to me, I got enough out of them to be confident that at the least you'll want to hear them. Schurman is an authentic expert who is lucid and I think dependable. When he gets into policy discussion and Nixonian analysis and VN(N and NLF) ayalysis of Nixonian intent, he is excellent. While listening to this, I wondered if you have read Mao. I have not read Giap, but I would imagine that his concepts are reformulations of Mao. In order to really understand how the war is being conducted by that side and to understand modern politics and policies, I think Mao is essential. I don't know where my copy of the one and I understand the basic work now is. I am pretty sure it was a translation by an Englishwoman, Ann Freemantle. Everything you get on this is the interpretation the government wants. The correspondents cover US wars the US way with US sources of expert info. They may go to a battlefield and say what the US doesn't want said, but that does mean they are qualified to explain the intentions of the other side. I rather imagine if one of these types were to get on camera and say "According to Chairman Mao" or "In the definitive stragetic concepts of General Giap" he'd be drawing unemployment compensation pretty fast. So, to understand what has to be understood and requires more than logic, you should get, if you haven't already, a grasp of the doctrine and methods of the other side for the Pentagon are not about to tell you. If you have time for summer reading and can't do both, I am handicapped by not having read Giap. However, I think the basis is Mao. He fought the Russian Communist theory which, as I also see it, was utterly irrelevant in China on the most elemental basis: there was no proletarit. So, how could anything base itself on the non-existent? The agricultural workers were the Chinese equivalent.

One of the things to which my mind wandered is your 6/29 to Jerry. I presume that although you wrote it in anger, it says what you meant to say and that you were aware of what it could mean. In case you did not give the second part full thought, I'd like to suggest that this will make a bigger difference in yout future relationship with Sylvia than you may imagine, on several counts. First, there is the possibility that when she is up to it, Jerry will tell her. You may have heard much, you may know the vindictiveness of which she is capable, but that crack about the Texas Observer will really turn rancid inside her unless she puts her head together on the whole thing. That will not be easy for her or for anyone else with her personality and history. And if Jerry's reaction is resentment instead os self-analysis, he may do what he knows will be provocative. It is sometimes in the mind of the one to whom it is done a sort of crime to lay him out. The precise and accurate, the greater the reaction of self-defense and resentment, generally speaking. There is nothing unusual about this and it is not a special reflection on Jerry. He is a human being, as we all are, and this is a natural mechanism. So, be prepared.

Jim's source on Sylvia's illness that is not directly from Jerry must be via Wecht. I will not take time tomorrow to go into this with him. There are other things we should spend the time on. He won't finish in a day anyway. It will require a special effort for him to be here 10:15-10:30, as he said he'd try. He works late and sleeps late.

You will have to do your own deciding on what is good for you. My own view is that you can learn all there is needed from one such experience. I had hoped you'd learn more from Sylvia, and I don't mean fact about the assassination. I doubt you now will. Without that, I think you'll have nothing to gain in the future. Too bad. This is the time your mind is more open and more flexible, and she is everything good I have said about her. So, anticipating that the future relationships will be different, don't let the bitterness of this mess gall you. After it is all over you will have also learned some political thinking, and there is no society in which this is not fundamental in your chosen field. You will, I am confident, decide as I have, that while we may come out of this without the new troubles and tragedies I consider likely, even if we do you will realize that was from the stupidities and unimaginativeness of the enemy and that the risk was not worth whatever gain there may be. This is the way the odds are, anyway. Time can disclose only what happens and its consequences, not its potential. That you will have to decide for yourself.

All in all, this disagreeable things has to be a + for you at your age. The only harm possible is to your book. I don't think Sylvia would lean on Tink on this and I don't think if she does he'll say the opposite of what he has. The influence on it can be in what happens.

If as you say you intend you remove the medical stuff, the possibility of adverse influence is reduced. And a plain, old-fashioned stink might well help, distasteful as that wil be, in fact nad as a means of promoting interest in your book. If Cyril and Nichols are handled roughly by the press, it may have a bad reaction, for a while, anyway. But I think your work will not be adversely influenced by anything that happens.

I hope, now that you have vented your feelings, you are more at ease. There is no need for you to be troubled by your decision. There are no absolutes is such matters. From your point of view, your position is sound. That is all that counts. I think, however, that because you dared assert independence and conditions required by your own honor and conscience, you may find that you are less "essential" that you had been considered and that only desparation will lead to their acceptance. If this is the case, you'll have the eaten cake, the satisfaction of having decided what you think is right without the liability of later possible regrets.

You had your catharsis, I hope. Good!

I did get some cleaning up done today. Now, instead of going what for a change I should, reading so you won't have to sweat out my typos, I'll read until bedtime and try and make that a bit earlier than usual.

There is another area of thought I propose, basedon these recent experiences: about the Commission members and their staff. Can you not make better and perhaps more understanding if not more foregiving judgements? Is ~~that~~ there all that difference in Belin and Ball from those you would regard as decent people that you found two-three months ago? ARe those things they did you couldn't understand a bit more comprehensible? Not forgiving, or forgetting or justifying. But can you now understand a bit more how they could come to do those things they did? To a degree you didn't see before maybe?

Best,